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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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11. Mideast

12. Israel-NATO Relations

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Key stories in the media:  
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Israel Radio reported that last night, President Bush devoted most of his State of the Union Address to the global war on terror and the Iraq issue. Giving an account of the President's speech before it was delivered, Ha'aretz's Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner defined it as a defense of U.S. policy. Israel Radio quoted Bush as saying in the address: "The Palestinian people have voted in elections. And now the leaders of Hamas must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace."

Israel Radio and leading Internet web sites reported that this morning, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition against the destruction of nine houses at the illegal settler outpost of Amona in the West Bank. The radio earlier reported that in the middle of the night, Justice Elyakim Rubinstein issued a temporary injunction against the demolition. All media highlighted the face-off at the outpost between security forces and right-wing activists. The electronic media reported that two far-right Knesset members, Effi Eitam and Aryeh Eldad, were among the first to be injured in the clashes, in which dozens have been hurt on both sides.

Ha'aretz (lead story in Hebrew Ed.) wrote that Russia and China are siding with the West for now on the issue of Iran's nuclear program, but that aggressive measures against Iran are still a long way off. Ha'aretz wrote that International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors have discovered documents proving that Iran intends to build a nuclear bomb.

Both Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post published interviews they held on Tuesday with Ismail Haniyeh, a senior Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip. In Ha'aretz, Haniyeh was quoted as saying that Hamas will oppose the transfer of control of the PA's security forces to PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas. In The Jerusalem Post, Haniyeh was quoted as saying: "Earthquakes are a symbol of destruction, while Hamas is talking about construction." Ma'ariv reported that Hamas is considering adopting an Iran-like regime. Israel Radio cited the London-based Al-Hayat as saying that Hamas and Islamic Jihad met in Damascus Tuesday, and that Islamic Jihad promised it would not disturb Hamas. The radio reported that Abbas will visit Egypt today to discuss with President Hosni Mubarak Hamas's victory in the Palestinian legislative elections. Yediot reported that Abbas is interested in Egypt mediating between the PA and the Hamas leadership, and that Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman will bring Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, from Damascus to Cairo for a meeting with Abbas. The Jerusalem Post quoted Western diplomatic officials as saying that Abbas, in recent talks with the Quartet

principals, asked for support for a transitional government so the PA could put its financial house in order, get out of the shadow of the Israeli elections, and give Hamas time to contemplate the fact that it now has to govern.

Leading media reported that FM Tzipi Livni will visit Cairo today to discuss the Hamas victory. Speaking on Israel Radio, she said that is very important that Egypt, the leading nation in the Arab world, support the position of the international community against the establishment of a terrorist state in the PA-controlled territories.

A high-ranking IDF officer was quoted as saying Tuesday in an interview with The Jerusalem Post that Hamas has yet to suspend its efforts to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israel despite having won the elections.

Leading media reported that on Tuesday, Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia and a senior member of the International Relations Committee, introduced the first legislative response to Hamas's victory in the PA elections. Cosponsored by Democrat Tom Lantos, the suggested legislation includes some extremely harsh measures. However, Ha'aretz cited the belief of Washington sources that some of them will not be included in the final draft of the legislation. Ha'aretz wrote that there is good reason to believe that the U.S. administration will try to moderate the language of the new legislation. Israel Radio said that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is behind the initiative.

All media reported that on Tuesday, an Israeli policeman was seriously injured and two wanted men from Islamic Jihad were killed in an incident near Jenin. Yediot cited Islamic Jihad as saying that its revenge will shock Israel.

Major media reported that on Tuesday, the Tel Aviv District Court sentenced Lebanon-born Danish citizen Iyad Al-Ashwah, accused of conspiring with Hizbullah, to 33 months in jail, in accordance with a plea bargain he had made with the prosecution.

Ha'aretz reported that thanks to the intervention of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Interior Ministry's Population Administration will streamline the process for granting residency permits to the spouses of East Jerusalem residents.

All media reported that on Tuesday, the Kadima party presented its list of 50 candidates for the Knesset. The first spots on the list are Acting PM Ehud Olmert's, veteran statesman Shimon Peres's, and Livni's. Former Shin Bet head Avi Dichter and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz are fifth and eighth on the list, respectively. Major media reported that former PM Ehud Barak, Tafnit leader Uzi Dayan, and the remnants of the Shinui Party are negotiating the possibility of running for the Knesset on a united slate under the Tafnit or Shinui name. The Jerusalem Post reported that the Israeli Arab parties are urging Israel to talk with Hamas.

Ha'aretz and Yediot reported that a few days ago, the Defense Ministry gave 2.4 million shekels (around USD 515,000) to 28 Palestinians who were tortured by the IDF and the Shin Bet. The payment was made after an out-of-court settlement was reached with the plaintiffs, who agreed that suits filed in the Tel Aviv Magistrate and District courts would be withdrawn.

All media reported that on Tuesday, the Palestinian film "Paradise Now" won an Oscar nomination for best foreign-language film of the year.

Maariv reported that the Italian newspaper Il Reformista awarded its prize of "man of the year in politics" to PM Ariel Sharon.

Major media reported that on Tuesday, the High Court of Justice reconfirmed the legality of the expected extradition of underworld kingpin Zeev Rosenstein to the U.S.

Citing news agencies, The Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday, the U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination of Judge Samuel A. Alito Jr. as an associate justice of the Supreme Court.

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Summary:  
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Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The international community, which is engaged in a difficult battle against fundamentalist Islam, has a rare lever here for achieving its goals. It must remain united and exploit this lever to the fullest."

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz (February 1): "Kadima is not seeking a permanent agreement, but rather improved management of the conflict."

Yossi Alpher, coeditor of the Israeli-Palestinian web site bitterlemons.org, a former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, and a former advisor to PM Ehud Barak, wrote in Ha'aretz: "The unintentional outcome of American policy is now in danger of hurting us seriously."

Hebrew University Political Science Professor Yehezkel Dror, the recipient of the prestigious 2005 Israel Prize for his work in public policy and strategic planning, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "It's way past time Israel designed a radically innovative, long-term grand strategy toward the future Palestine."

Former Israeli Representative to the UN Dore Gold wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Hamas spokesmen are not always cautious and sometimes expose the identification with global jihad."

Block Quotes:  
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**I. "A Determined World"**

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (February 1): "It is impossible not to be impressed by the international community's determined and vital stance [in the wake of the elections in the Palestinian Authority].... Nevertheless, it is already possible to distinguish differences in nuance between the Americans, who seek to emphasize the stick of sanctions, and the Europeans, who prefer to hold out the carrot of aid. There are grounds for believing that, in the long run, the Bush administration -- which came up with the plan to democratize the Middle East -- will take an uncompromising and threatening line toward Hamas, while the Europeans and the UN will prefer a 'wait and see' approach.... The international community, which is engaged in a difficult battle against fundamentalist Islam, has a rare lever here for achieving its goals. It must remain united and exploit this lever to the fullest."

**II. "Managing the Conflict"**

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz (February 1): "Kadima is not seeking a permanent agreement, but rather improved management of the conflict. It's offering to stabilize a new border that will keep the Palestinian masses out of the Israelis' sight, and bring home the settlers and soldiers from the hills of Samaria [the northern West Bank] and the ravines of Judea [the southern West Bank]. The withdrawal will end the status of occupation, which is unpopular in the world, and move the conflict to one of a border dispute between two sovereign countries, 'who will settle their differences through negotiations,' as Olmert said. Thus, Israel will be freed of disturbing international pressure and of a reputation as an oppressive occupation regime."

**III. "What Should Israel Do?"**

Yossi Alpher, coeditor of the Israeli-Palestinian web site bitterlemons.org, a former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, and a former advisor to PM Ehud Barak, wrote in Ha'aretz (February 1): "Until now, official Israel has been remarkably tolerant of President George W. Bush's democratic reform plan for the Arab Middle East, even though that plan has empowered these radicals. After all, the U.S. is our ally, American lives are at risk in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it behooves us to support the U.S. effort in the region. But the unintentional outcome of American policy is now in danger of hurting us seriously. It's time to look for persuasive ways to say, 'With respect, Mr. President, your approach is wrong. Democratization cannot take the form of elections that install militant anti-democratic

Islamists. Desist'.... Sadly but necessarily, we have to at least contemplate eventual military action to remove Islamist threats on more than one neighboring front.... Many of our neighboring regimes, led by Egypt and Jordan, share some or all of our concerns. The situation calls for quiet but expanded coordination with them."

#### IV. "Israel Needs a 'Grand Strategy'"

Hebrew University Political Science Professor Yehezkel Dror, the recipient of the prestigious 2005 Israel Prize for his work in public policy and strategic planning, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (February 1): "It's way past time Israel designed a radically innovative, long-term grand strategy toward the future Palestine; one nested within an overall regional and global political-military approach. As far as possible, such an effort should be coordinated with the U.S. (and other willing countries); but if necessary, Israel should act on its own.... [IN any case], in a vacuum, further unilateral withdrawals could increase support for Hamas.... Allowing a future Palestine to develop its military capabilities is a sure prescription for disaster -- especially in the long term, and not just for Israel but (more immediately) for Jordan.... As far as influencing thinking is concerned, this could ideally be achieved by some kind of international trusteeship that would take charge of teaching, influencing religious exhortations, reforming the educational curriculum and fostering mass media that socialize for tolerance."

#### IV. "In the Service of World Islam"

Former Israeli Representative to the UN Dore Gold wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (February 1): "Many commentators tend to separate Hamas from world jihad terrorist organizations such Al Qaida.... [But] Hamas spokesmen are not always cautious and sometimes expose the identification with global jihad. For instance, after the disengagement, Mahmoud Zahar declared: 'We are part of a great world program called the World Islamic Movement.' He expressed his confidence that the disengagement would raise the mood of the Arab and Muslim world, and influence the struggle in Iraq and Afghanistan as well. On January 30, the leader of the Islamic movement in Jordan declared that Hamas's victory was the model for an Islamic takeover of additional regimes. Including Jordan.... Thus, the rise of Hamas strengthens the Israeli need for maintaining 'defensible borders', and, through them, preserving regional stability as a whole."

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#### 12. Israel-NATO Relations:

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##### Summary:

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Uzi Arad, Chairman of the Herzliya Conference and Chairman of the Atlantic Forum of Israel, who was a senior advisor to former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Jerusalem should follow with interest the upcoming meeting of the NATO defense ministers, in which ... the idea of Israel's membership may be discussed."

##### Block Quotes:

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#### "Is Israel Headed For NATO?"

Uzi Arad, Chairman of the Herzliya Conference and Chairman of the Atlantic Forum of Israel, who was a senior advisor to former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (February 1): "Italian Defense Minister Antonio Martino recently announced that in his opinion, the time has come to include Israel in NATO as a regular member, and he intends to raise the issue at the meeting of NATO defense ministers next week. Martino emphasized further that any future aggression against Israel would be considered an act of aggression against all the NATO states, and such recognition will undoubtedly contribute to the stability in the region.... NATO's interest in including Israel stems from the heightened involvement of the alliance in the greater Middle East, and recognition of the potential contribution that Israel is capable of making, due to its experience and capabilities.... It would appear that recently, more favorable winds have been blowing in Europe. Moreover, the strategic understandings

between the U.S. and Israel, which were formulated between then-prime minister Netanyahu and President Clinton, and subsequently ratified by their successors, including President Bush's letter of commitments from April 2004, successfully anchor Israel's right to defend itself -- on its own.... Jerusalem should follow with interest the upcoming meeting of the NATO defense ministers, in which, as mentioned above, the idea of Israel's membership may be discussed."

JONES